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that is a very debatable point and that other people have other views. I respect those other views.

I take the position, and it is my honest belief, that a spouse does not have to accept a set of rules or a code of conduct merely because of the marriage to a person upon whom those rules of conduct are imposed.

I could go on with Bill C-43 and point out other areas of difficulty. However, it is like all legislation that is brought before any legislative chamber. It has to be debated, considered and if there is agreement and concurrence to the subject matter of the bill then it can pass. I have never known any member of the opposition to stand in his or her place and say that this bill can be passed at any particular point in time. It can be brought forward for debate. If it was, I would have objections to the bill and I am sure other members would have objections. I am sure members of the opposition would say that it does not go far enough. The mere fact that it has not been processed and passed by this House is no reflection on the good will that is involved in the preparation of the bill and the codifying of those rules of conduct.

An hon. member: I cannot believe that.

Mr. Crosby: The member says he cannot believe it, yet he is a member of a party that held office for years and never made any attempt to codify the rules that govern public officials or government members in the form of a statute. Nobody has told me that Bill C-43, its predecessor, Bill C-114, or the private member's bill that I introduced had such universal acceptance that it could be brought forward and passed.

There are codes of conduct that have been established, that have been written down, that could be brought forward, that could be passed and that could be made law. Any one of them is going to have a measure of defects and a measure of merit, but if it does not accomplish the purpose of satisfying the public concern about the trust they place in elected officials then it will not accomplish the goal for which it was established.

That is the point that I want to make. Unless the members of Parliament can agree that all of us and all members of government should be governed by a code, unless we all agree on what is the proper and appropriate code to govern us, it will not be successful because people will simply fail to observe it and will find ways

around it and will use their ingenuity to avoid the provisions.

There is no magic to enacting, as a code of conduct, as a set of public principles or public ethics, a statute that will then not be observed, will not be effective and will not create trust among members of the public.

I have never directed my mind to the question of whether the legislation before the House in the form of Bill C-43 would accomplish those purposes. However, nobody in the opposition has ever asked me to bring the bill forward and nobody has ever said that if the bill is brought forward it will be passed. Nobody has ever agreed to make the kinds of changes that I would want to see made.

It is just like any other legislative measure. If it does not have obvious support, if it is going to run into difficulties, if it is going to be debated, if it is not going to be given second reading, if it is not going to be brought before a committee and if it is just going to cause more strife, then it is understandable why it would remain on the Order Paper.

Let us look at what is needed to restore the confidence of the public in our political leadership and in our elected representatives, not just at the national level but right across the country. Certainly the people of Canada have a right to expect that their elected representatives will not involve themselves in any business affairs of any kind that will affect their judgment on the issues brought before them. That is what we call conflict of interest and that is the first thing to cover in any kind of ethics legislation. We must have clear provisions that would prevent any elected person, any member of government or any official from becoming involved in a matter in which their own interests affect their decision making.

I have tried many times to construct that kind of provision and it is difficult if not impossible. The most we can do is indicate the obvious situations, such as an interest in a contract, a personal interest in a transaction involving the sale or acquisition of property and that sort of thing. However there are all kinds of subtle ways in which a person can have an interest in a matter and yet not violate statutory conflict of interest provisions.

The best way to deal with the matter is to simply spell out what the offensive acts are and then impose a penalty. When that is done it simply becomes another penal statute and the code of conduct ends up competing with the Criminal Code, the Parliament of Canada Act